

Dublin - Darlington Community Area

Community Character

The Dublin-Darlington Community Area is a region of rolling hills, farms, forests, and streams in northeastern Harford County. The transportation network for the Dublin-Darlington area is comprised of arterial roads and small rural roads. With MD Route 155 being the southern border of the community area, MD Routes 161, 136 and 440 connect the Dublin and Darlington communities. Examples of some of the small rural roads that run throughout the area are Harmony Church Road, Trappe Church Road and Castleton Road. The unique landscape of the Dublin-Darlington area, which extends from Deer Creek to Broad Creek, and the Susquehanna River, contains natural assets and resources which deserve special protection, including water sources vital to agriculture, and numerous significant endangered species and habitats.

In the 2000 Census, the Dublin-Darlington area had a population of 6,138, which is 2.8% of the County's population (Figure 49). Between 1990 and 2000, the population decreased by 0.62%. While the population between the ages of 20 - 34 experienced the greatest population reduction, 38% (from 1,407 to 872); the 0-4 age group and 5-9 age group also declined. Other age groups, however, grew in size. The population between the ages of 50 - 64 years showed the highest growth with a 29% increase (911 to 1,177). During the same period, however, the number of households increased by 3.5% - from 2,195 to 2,273.

Dublin - Darlington Demographic Profile: 1990 – 2000

	1990	2000	Percent Change
Total Population	6,176	6,138	-0.62%
Total Households	2,195	2,273	3.55%
Median Household Income (in current \$)	\$35,547	\$52,896	48.81%
Employment	1,115	1,455	30.49%
Population By Race / Hispanic Origin			
White	5,749	5,746	-0.05%
Black	351	287	-18.23%
American Indian/Alaska Native	13	20	53.85%
Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	56	22	-60.71%
Other	7	15	114.29%
Population of 2 or more Races	NA	48	NA
Hispanic Population	25	47	88.00%

Figure 49

Throughout the County, household income is up 37%. The median household income for this area grew 49% in the last decade from \$35,547 to \$52,896. Households in this community earning over \$100,000 a year increased by 152%, while households earning less than \$50,000 a year decreased by 32%. Total employment in this area increased by 30% from 1,115 to 1,455.

Almost 25% percent of the Dublin-Darlington Community Area is protected through agricultural preservation programs including the Lower Deer Creek Rural Legacy area. While the different agricultural preservation programs act to protect farmland from being developed, the Rural Legacy program aids in the preservation of the historic character of the valley and helps to protect the water quality of Deer Creek.

The Deer Creek Scenic River District is established by the County Code to preserve Deer Creek as a free flowing stream and to preserve and protect its natural and cultural values for present and future generations. An appointed Scenic River Advisory Board reviews proposals for new development within 150 feet of the banks of the Creek, and makes recommendations concerning management and preservation of Deer Creek. The Deer Creek Watershed has been targeted by the Harford County Soil Conservation District to develop soil conservation and water quality plans to address the nonpoint sources of pollution from agricultural operations.

There are two centers of population and services in the community area, Dublin and Darlington. Both have historical roles as market and service centers for a rich agricultural community. According to *“Our Harford Heritage”*, the first recorded mention of Dublin was in 1880. Dublin was the crossroads for the logging industry and boasted one of the County’s first rural post offices.

The village of Darlington, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, has a 270-year history, and has changed little since the turn of this century. It still has 39 (90%) of the 43 structures shown on an 1878 map of Harford County. Post 1878 architecture has followed traditional lines with very few exceptions. Berkley, located just outside of Darlington’s village boundary, is one of the few documented stops along the Underground Railroad. It is home to the Hosanna School, a National Register and County Landmark property, and Harford County's first public school for African Americans.

Recently, the Hosanna School organization obtained funds for a historically correct renovation that will include the replacement of the second story. Furthermore, the Berkley area has been designated as a National Register Historic District. The area also contains a number of other historic structures located in the Lower Deer Creek Valley Historic District.

Also located within this community area is the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway (LSHG). Containing several key elements related to the early history of the United States of America, the LSHG was designated in 1997 by the Maryland Heritage Area Authority (MHAA) as a Certified Maryland Heritage Area. Heritage areas are designed to link the cultural and historic resources of an area while providing recreational opportunities.

The Dublin-Darlington community area is a Harford County destination for outdoor recreational activities with two State Parks, several County Parks, portions of a Baltimore Council Boy Scout Camp, a section of an interstate hiking trail (the 250-mile Mason and Dixon Trail), a portion of the LSHG and a private marina.

A branch of the County library and two public elementary schools serve the communities. Middle and high school students attend classes at the North Harford, Havre de Grace and Aberdeen campuses. Based on the October 2003 amendment to the Annual Growth Report, none of these

schools exceed the APF standards for capacity. Fire and emergency services are provided by the Darlington Volunteer Fire Company, the Dublin Volunteer Fire Company and by the Level Volunteer Fire Company. The Sheriff's Office maintains a community policing substation at the Wilson Center in Darlington. This community area also contains a number of facilities that serve the County and region. These include the Harford County Solid Waste Disposal Facilities and Exelon Power Company.

Plan for the Area

In this community, agriculture shall remain the dominant priority for land use, zoning, and economic development. It is an important agricultural area whose productiveness must be sustained and strengthened. Land use planning shall focus on preserving, protecting, promoting, and enhancing agriculture in this area. Secondary long range planning objectives shall include protecting natural resources; preserving historically important lands, structures and functions; reserving lands for future use as open space, buffers, and parks and recreation activities for the County and community residents; and, reserving lands for community facilities to support the Dublin-Darlington Community Area. Industries compatible with, or supportive of, agriculture shall be encouraged. These include logging, mining, granaries, canneries, and agricultural repair, sales, and service suppliers.

Agricultural preservation efforts should continue in this area. Of special importance is further protection of properties located in the Lower Deer Creek Valley Rural Legacy Area. Protection of land within this designated area will provide multiple benefits to the community.

To help support the continuation of farming as a viable occupation, existing programs should be enhanced and creative ways developed to foster continued agricultural use and businesses in this area. The County should also develop policies and programs to promote new and diversified agricultural businesses and support the relocation of existing agricultural-related businesses into the community area.

Maintaining the viability of the villages of Dublin and Darlington is another important goal of this community area. The community views Darlington as a rural village with unique historical assets, while Dublin has traditionally served as a rural village, which contains services for the surrounding agricultural and rural community.

To ensure the continuation of these roles, the size, shape, and appearance of new construction should be compatible with existing structures and the primary functions of Darlington and Dublin as Rural Villages. New development and redevelopment in the villages should be designed in a manner compatible with existing architecture in the villages and should help support community needs. Special attention also needs to be given to existing commercially zoned areas outside the villages. Because these areas often serve as gateways to the villages, similar standards should be applied to their design.

Community and local business members have been working with County government to create a Village Business Design Guideline for Darlington. This guidance is provided to aid with the preservation of Darlington's physical character and economic viability.

To further support this concept, this Plan does not support expansion of the village boundaries to accommodate new uses. Areas presently defined for commercial use are deemed adequate to meet the immediate and foreseeable future retail and service needs of the community. No additional commercial zoning will be supported within this community area unless further analysis determines that there is a need for additional commercial land. Any additional zoning changes will also be subject to a technical analysis to ensure that the proposed change will not generate adverse impacts in the community.

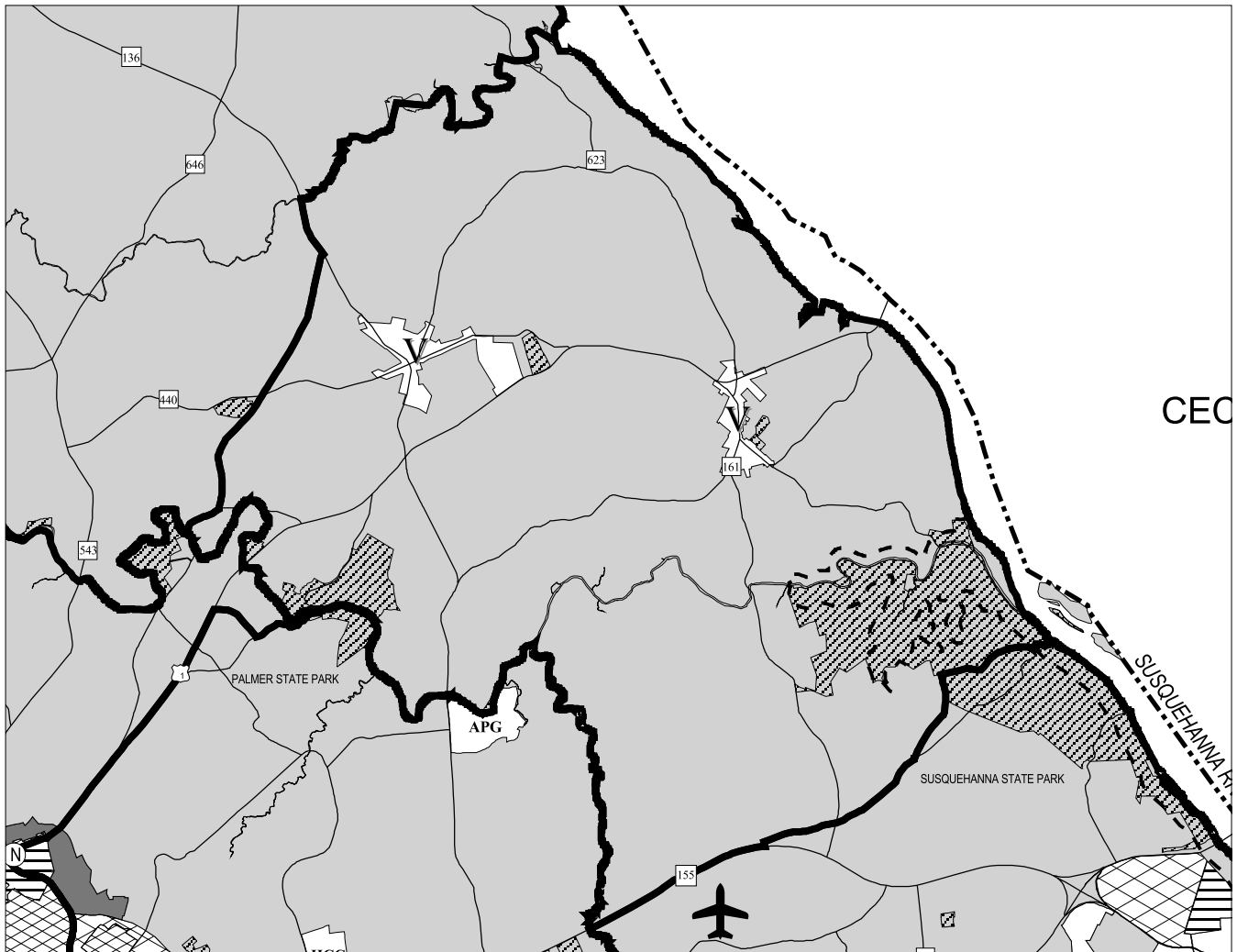
Current road systems are generally adequate for community purposes. Planned road improvements include the realignment of MD Route 161 as it enters the village proper of Darlington, and the refurbishing of sidewalks along MD Route 161 and Shuresville Road. These improvements, coordinated with the State Highway Administration, consider the needs of farm machinery, and do not encourage increased through traffic, or increased weight-loads or speeds.

The Dublin-Darlington Community Area has the potential to provide land for future County recreational needs such as hiking, equestrian and biking trails, and athletic fields. Plans for public recreation must take into account the agricultural basis of the area. The scale and type of any commercial or recreational facilities must be consistent with the present character of this area. Future public land acquisition for recreation should focus on acquiring lands adjacent to existing State and County parks as they become available.










Development, infrastructure, and public facilities all must be supportive of the historical character of the area, as well as the agricultural community. The community should identify significant scenic features which it desires to preserve for the future, and should work with local landowners and developers to find ways to protect and preserve those features.

In order to protect the natural environment and character of the area, land development in the community should be consistent with land capability in order to prevent other negative environmental impacts. The Dublin-Darlington community is concerned with the possible withdrawal of Deer Creek water for use by the City of Aberdeen. The impact of such a withdrawal should be studied as it will affect the profile and nature of the creek and its valleys. The topography, soil depth, drainage, slope, and other sensitive environmental aspects of the land in the area should be allowed to limit development naturally. The volume and quality of the subsurface water supply should also be protected.

Endangered plants and significant habitats should be classified and their general location identified; additional protection strategies for these areas should be sought and implemented. It is important to increase protection of rare plants and habitats areas in and along Deer Creek, the Susquehanna River, and other areas which are not within the Natural Resource District or Chesapeake Bay Critical Area.



Dublin-Darlington Community Area

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|---|---|---|--|
|  | Agricultural | N | Neighborhood Center |
|  | Rural Residential | C | Community Center |
|  | Low Intensity | V | Rural Village |
|  | Medium Intensity | T | Town Center |
|  | High Intensity |  | Airport |
|  | Industrial/Employment | HCC | Harford Community College |
|  | State and County Parks
(over 10 acres) | HEAT | Higher Education Applied Technology |
| MO | Mixed Office | - - - | Chesapeake Bay
Critical Area Boundary |
|  | Community Area
Boundary | | |

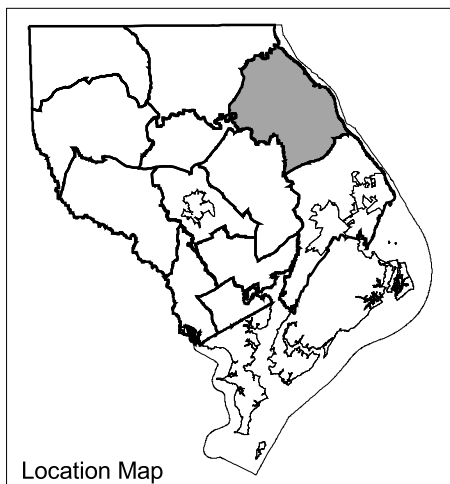


Figure 50

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